Test fire of Dhanush

587. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 'Dhanush', the indigenously developed short range ballistic missile, was test fired from the Bay of Bengal off the Orissa coast recently;

(b) whether it is a fact that 'Dhanush' is the naval version of the surface to surface missile system Prithvi-II; and

(c) if so, when 'Dhanush' is expected to become operational?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir. 'Dhanush' was test fired successfully from a naval ship off the Orissa coast on 7th November, 2004.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) Development tests have been completed. Dhanush is in the final phase of induction.

Financial clearance of specialised clothing for soldiers at Siachen and Kargil

588. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the army has asked for three sets of specialised clothing for soldiers at 16,000 feet at Siachen and Kargil but have not yet got financial clearance for the third set;

(b) whether it is a fact that the third set is required for soldiers who may have to be rushed in, in case hostilities break out and to start the acclimatisation process for the next batch, once the soldiers currently at the Northern Command make their way to Siachen and Kargil;

(c) whether it is a fact that total amount required for three sets of winter clothing a year is Rs.142.2 crores out of the Defence budget of Rs.72,000 crore; and

(d) if so, the reasons for delay in according the financial clearance?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) The Indian Army is authorized to maintain two sets of special clothing and mountaineering equipment for Siachen and Super High Altitude areas. Out of these, one set is authorized to the troops in the field formations and the second set is maintained as reserve. There are no shortages in the special clothing and mountaineering equipment. No proposal to provide for the third set of clothing is under consideration of the Government as the present system of providing 100 per cent reserve is adequate.

It is a fact that total amount required for three sets of winter clothing a year is Rs.142.2 crores out of the Defence budget of Rs. 72,000 crores.

Shortage of special clothing and equipment for troops at high altitudes

589. SHRI ANAND SHARMA:
SHRI AJAY SINGH CHAUTALA:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the reported shortage of special clothing and equipment for troops deployed in high altitude regions;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken by the Army headquarters to ensure adequate and timely availability of the same?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (c) The Indian Army is authorized to maintain two sets of special clothing and mountaineering equipment for Siachen and Super High Altitude areas. Out of these, one set is authorized to the troops in the field formations and the second set is maintained as reserve. There are no shortages in the special clothing and mountaineering equipment.

Upgradation of IAF

590. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that IAF Chief has suggested downsizing and simultaneously upgrading IAF to make it more effective;